

REMARKS

In this amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 23 have been amended. No claims have been canceled. Claims 1-29 remain pending.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, FIRST PARAGRAPH

The Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter to which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner observed that it was not clear how, in claim 2 "the base includes a second connector adapted to engage a portion of said base." Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested in view of the amendment made by the Applicant.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(B)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 8, 9, 12-14, 18, 22-26 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,391,360, issued to Kochte et al. (herein Kochte). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested in view of the amendments and addition made to the claims and of the following discussion.

It is axiomatic that for a reference to be anticipatory, each and every feature in the claims must be disclosed by the single reference. Kochte does not anticipate the features present in the currently amended claims to include "a rotator clevis" and "a latch lever . . . in mechanical communication with said rotator clevis." The rotator clevis is secured to the elongated member such that when the latch lever is moved, the connector is also rotated by the movement of the knobs of the engagement member with respect to the rotator clevis.

In view of the foregoing discussion and the amendments made to the claims, Applicant submits that the § 102(b) rejections are overcome. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the § 102(b) rejections be withdrawn.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Kochte, U.S. Patent No. 5,391,360, in view of Jacobsen, U.S. Patent No. 4,644,651.

Specifically, the Examiner has stated that Kotche "discloses a latch assembly substantially as claimed; wherein said assembly includes a rotator clevis." As discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Kotche does not teach the use of a rotator clevis as a part of the elongated member. In addition, Applicant submits that it would not be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Kotche and Jacobsen as the general teaching of Kotche relied upon by the Examiner does not suggest the specific combination of Kotche and Jacobsen. Moreover, Jacobsen teaches the use of a forked member that attaches to a lever, but unlike the rotator clevis of Applicant's mechanism, the forked member is not fixedly attached to the lever. Thus, the forked member portion is rotatably coupled to the lever.

As claims 2-4, 7-22, and 24-29 depend on allowable independent claims, Applicant submits these claims are allowable over the prior art for the same reasons.

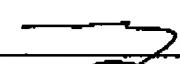
In view of the foregoing discussion, Applicant submits that the § 103 rejections are overcome. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully submits that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance and requests such allowance at the earliest possible time.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account 10-0440, or to credit any overpayment to the same. A duplicate copy of this paper is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 23, 2003

GEORGE G.C. TSENG, Reg. No. 41,355

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